

Application Serial No. 09/878,744
Amendment dated June 4, 2004
Reply to Office Action of December 4, 2003

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 35, 36, 49, and 51 have been amended. The allowance of claims 14-34, 37, 41-44, 47, and 48, and the allowability of claims 3-10 and 51-58, are noted with appreciation. Re-examination and reconsideration of the application, in view of the amendments above and the remarks below, are respectfully requested.

The Examiner continued the rejection of claims 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 35, 36, 45, 46 (as it depends from claim 1), 49, 50 and 60 as being anticipated by MacQueen U.S. Patent No. 5, 485,690. The Examiner also continued the rejection of claims 38-40 and 59 as being obvious in view of MacQueen and DiClementi et al U.S. Patent No. 6,088,937. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

The Examiner helpfully identified what he considered to be Applicants' claimed "arms" and "receivers" in MacQueen. Namely, the Examiner is reading Applicants' claimed "arms" on the outer ends of MacQueen's pipe 72, and Applicants' claimed "receivers" on MacQueen's area that receives the ends of pipe 72, 94, 94', 94a, 94a', 94b, 94b'. To clarify the invention, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 2, 35, 36 and 49 to call for the first and second receivers to receive the first and second arms, respectively "upon relative longitudinal movement therebetween." In stark contrast, the outer ends of MacQueen's pipe 72 are "received" in his 94, 94', 94a, 94a', 94b, 94b' upon lateral, i.e. transverse relative movement therebetween, not relative longitudinal movement therebetween as is now

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claimed. Accordingly, it is submitted that the §102(b) rejection of claims 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 35, 36, 45, 46/1, 49, 50 and 60 has been overcome. Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that MacQueen provides no suggestion or motivation for such, and therefore no obviousness rejection of the claims is warranted.

Moreover, DiClementi et al supplies none of the deficiencies of MacQueen.

Lastly, the Examiner indicated that claims 3-10 and 51-58 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants have rewritten claims 3 and 51 in independent form, and it is submitted that all of these claims are now in a condition for allowance.

In view of the above, it is submitted that all of the claims are now allowable. Re-examination of the application is respectfully requested, and an early Notice Of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

WOOD, HERRON & EVANS, L.L.P.

By: 

Wayne L. Jacobs
Reg. No. 35553

2700 Carew Tower
441 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202
Phone: (513) 241-2324
Fax: (513) 421-7269